

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

In the specification on page 2, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 10 and ending at line 19 with the following paragraph:

--We have found that this object is achieved by a process for dewatering hydrocyanic acid by distillation, which comprises distilling crude hydrocyanic acid containing from 50 to 99.9% by weight of HCN, from 0.1 to 40% by weight of water, from 0 to 15% by weight of carbon oxides and optionally from 0.01 to 1% by weight of an ~~involatile stabilizer~~ non-volatile stabilizer, at a pressure of from 1 bar to 2.5 bar, a bottom temperature of from 100°C to 130°C and a top temperature of from 25°C to 54°C, in the absence of a volatile stabilizer, in a distillation column to obtain a top draw stream comprising purified, anhydrous hydrocyanic acid and carbon oxides and a bottom draw stream comprising water and, where appropriate, the ~~involatile stabilizer~~ non-volatile stabilizer.--

In the specification on page 2, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 21 and ending at line 26 with the following paragraph:

--Surprisingly, despite the comparatively high temperatures in the distillation column and even though no volatile stabilizer is used, no polymerization of hydrocyanic acid occurs during distillation. In this context, it has to be considered that, in the case of the possible use of ~~involatile stabilizers~~ non-volatile stabilizers, they remain in the column bottom and therefore cannot have stabilizing action in the distillation column above the feed of the crude hydrocyanic acid.--

In the specification on page 2, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 28 and ending at line 31 with the following paragraph:

--The process according to the invention achieves simple dewatering of the aqueous crude hydrocyanic acid by distillation. The addition of expensive dehydrating agents such as

molecular sieves can therefore be dispensed with. Even ~~involatile stabilizers~~ non-volatile stabilizers are also removed directly in this way.--

In the specification on page 2 and 3, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 33 of page 2 and ending at line 2 of page 3 with the following paragraph:

--Suitable ~~involatile stabilizers~~ non-volatile stabilizers which may be present in the crude hydrocyanic acid to be dewatered are, for example, sulfuric acid and phosphoric acid. These may be present in the crude hydrocyanic acid instead of volatile stabilizers, for example sulfur dioxides. It is thus also unnecessary to remove volatile stabilizers, for example by passing inert gas through the hydrocyanic acid before it is used in the hydrocyanation reaction, as described in US 2,571,099.--

In the specification on page 3, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 4 and ending at line 9 with the following paragraph:

--The crude hydrocyanic acid to be dewatered by the process according to the invention contains from 50 to 99.9% by weight, preferably from 70 to 95% by weight, of HCN, from 0.1 to 40% by weight, preferably from 5 to 30% by weight, of water, from 0 to 15% by weight, preferably from 0.1 to 10% by weight, of carbon oxides (CO and CO₂) and, if desired, from 0.01 to 1% by weight of an ~~involatile stabilizer~~ non-volatile stabilizer.--

In the specification on page 3, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 14 and ending at line 16 with the following paragraph:

--The process may also be carried out when the crude hydrocyanic acid to be dewatered contains no stabilizer at all (i.e. no ~~involatile stabilizer~~ non-volatile stabilizer either).--

In the specification on page 3, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 18 and ending at line 19 with the following paragraph:

--When the crude hydrocyanic acid contains ~~involatile stabilizers~~ non-volatile stabilizer, they are preferably phosphoric acid or sulfuric acid.--

In the specification on page 4, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 13 and ending at line 21 with the following paragraph:

--a) in a first step, distilling and thus dewatering crude hydrocyanic acid containing from 50 to 99.9% by weight of HCN, from 0.1 to 40% by weight of water, from 0 to 15% by weight of carbon oxides and optionally from 0.01 to 1% by weight of an ~~involatile stabilizer~~ non-volatile stabilizer, at a pressure of from 1 bar to 2.5 bar, a bottom temperature of from 100°C to 130°C and a top temperature of from 25°C to 54°C, in the absence of a volatile stabilizer, in a distillation column, and optionally storing the dewatered hydrocyanic acid obtained as a top draw stream in the absence of a stabilizer, and--

In the specification on page 5, please replace the paragraphs beginning at line 4 and ending at line 17 with the following paragraph:

--Distillation of hydrocyanic acid in the presence of an ~~involatile stabilizer~~ non-volatile stabilizer

--A bubble-cap tray column having a diameter of 30 mm and a tray number of 37 is charged continuously with 65 g/h of crude hydrocyanic acid containing 99.6% by weight of HCN, 0.2% by weight of water and 0.2% by weight of phosphoric acid as an ~~involatile stabilizer~~ non-volatile stabilizer. The column is operated at a pressure of 1.2 bar absolute. At this pressure, a temperature of 32°C is established at the top of the column and a temperature of 107°C at the bottom of the column. The top stream of anhydrous hydrocyanic acid is continuously withdrawn and collected in a buffer vessel. The hydrocyanic acid withdrawn at the

top of the column is clear and colorless; its water content is measured by IR spectrometry and is below the detection limit of 50 ppm. The bottom stream consists of water, high-boiling phosphoric acid and traces of HCN (in the ppm range).--